

CHAPTER 4

PARK AND OPEN SPACE OBJECTIVES AND STANDARDS

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), as part of A Land Use Plan for the City Of Waukesha: 2010, formulated a comprehensive set of park and related open space objectives and standards. These objectives and standards address community and neighborhood facilities as well as regional park and open space facilities. Past Park and Open Space Plans for the City of Waukesha have utilized those objectives and standards, which are applicable to the formation of a park and recreation plan for the City.

In the early 1900's the Playground Association of America developed a plan for Washington D.C. to provide playgrounds, recreation centers, and athletic fields. Every school district was to have at least one acre of land for each 2,000 children. This recommendation of the Playground Association became one of the first recorded recreation space standards.

George Butler of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) established recommended space standards for playgrounds in neighborhoods of different populations. Butler reluctantly prepared a standard of 10 acres of park and open space per 1,000 population within each city, plus an equal area in parkways, large parks, forests, and the like, either within or adjacent to the City. His reluctance to suggest a definitive standard arose because he saw that this standard, or any other, was likely to be used indiscriminately regardless of location and other factors that must modify the standard.



Phoenix Heights Playground

According to the NRPA¹, very little has changed with recreation facility standards in the past decades. Because of the substantial changes suggested for computing the Level of Service (LOS), this publication takes a more deferential approach than its predecessor to community judgement with respect to sizing the different types of parks. Recent research on the use of Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines (NRPA, 1983) suggests that few jurisdictions feel that nationally prescribed minimums by park type are feasible.

Keep in mind that when a park size is being considered, the planner must consider not only the LOS but also the amount of space needed to safely develop and use facilities such as playgrounds and volleyball courts. Today, planners are providing more off street parking, more spectator space, more space to separate facilities, and more space for amenities.

A community can select a facility menu which best satisfies the needs of the citizens. Table 4 (p. 15) is adopted from the 1983 NPRA publication, with the qualification that planners use these as guidelines rather than axioms. Since citizens are taking a more active role in deciding what kind of parks and facilities they want in their community, this seems to be the most sensible approach. As has been stated and restated, the primary concern of park and recreation administrators is to see that there is enough park land, located in the right places, at the time people are there to use it. Park facilities can be cycled as needs, tastes and types of equipment and leisure choices change. But, if a community comes up short of land, this may be a difficult and expensive deficiency to overcome.

¹ Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, James O. Mertes, Ph.D, CLP; James R. Hail, CLP; Co-task Force Chairs, NRPA Publication, December, 1995, pgs. 121-124.

The trend in park and recreation planning is to utilize market research to determine relevant recreation needs. This is based on the facility capacity/demand to participate concept. This seems more credible than relying on the strength of popular fads. Specialized facilities in the 1990's which in many cases can be provided by the private sector, should be developed only with strong market data to support a need (demand) for the facility.

In 1995 the NRPA updated the Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines. These guidelines directed communities to establish a LOS, and provided minimum level of service standards, which should be adhered to. The SEWRPC standards are based specifically on per capita acreage, and service area distances, the NPRA guidelines look at those same elements but in a more flexible way based on the level of service for neighborhood area vs. specific overall population, and also consider standards for items like travel time.

The objectives of both the SEWRPC standards and the NRPA guidelines are the same; to provide an integrated system of parks and open space throughout the community. Recognizing that, the City will use a combination of both sets of standards to best address the needs of the City residents.

An objective is defined as a goal or end toward the attainment of which parks and policies are directed. The following objectives were utilized in the development of the POSP for the City:

1. The provision of an integrated system of public general use outdoor recreation sites and related open space areas which will allow residents of the City adequate opportunity to participate in a wide range of outdoor recreation activities.
2. The provision of sufficient outdoor recreation facilities to allow the resident population of the City adequate opportunity to participate in outdoor recreation activities.
3. Preservation of sufficient high quality open space lands for the protection of the underlying and sustaining natural resource base and enhancement of the social and economic well being and environmental quality of the City.



Timber Ridge Trail

The recreation site and facility standards used in the analysis of park and recreation facility needs for the City are of two basic types: (1) per capita standards with consideration also given to neighborhood areas and (2) accessibility standards with consideration also given to travel times to the parks and facilities.

The service area standard is expressed as a maximum service area around recreation sites and facilities. It is intended to determine whether the existing recreation sites and facilities are spatially distributed in a manner convenient to the resident population intended to determine whether the overall number of recreation site acres and facilities in a given neighborhood area is sufficient to satisfy the existing and proposed recreation demands of the resident population. Travel times to such sites and facilities are considered as well as barriers to accessibility such as railroad tracks, rivers, major arterial streets, etc.

Using these standards; it may be determined that per capita standards for recreation sites and facilities may be met, however, a need may still exist for additional site and facilities because of the relative inaccessibility of the existing recreation areas to some of the resident population in the City. This can be due to the location of given facilities in the City or barriers to accessibility.

The per capita recreation site standards used in the past plans are shown in Table 3 (below). These standards include per capita standards for publicly owned park sites. Classification Table 4 (below) contains service area standards for location and size criteria of different classifications of parks as recommended by the NRPA. Table 5 (p. 17) contains suggested outdoor facility development standards that address service radius, space requirements, and orientation of different types of recreation facilities found throughout the different classifications of parks.

TABLE 3

URBAN LAND USE STANDARDS FOR THE WAUKESHA URBAN SERVICE AREA

Land Use Category	Development Standard (gross area)	Current Population 2006	Urban Service Area Population 2010
Public Outdoor Recreational Sites:	In accordance with the adopted Major Waukesha County Park and Open Space Plan	67,750	86,340
Community Park Sites	3.1 acres/1,000 persons	210.03	267.70
Neighborhood Park Sites	3.3 acres/1,000 persons	223.58	285.00
*Mini Park Sites	*No per capita standard is given for Mini Parks, but they are recognized as filling an important niche in the park system where needed.	N/A	N/A
Total Required Acreage:		433.61	552.70

TABLE 4

NRPA PARKS AND OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATIONS

Classification	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria	Application of LOS
Mini-Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs	Less than a ¼ mile distance in residential setting	Between 2500 sq. ft. and one acre in size	Yes
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood park remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation	¼ to ½ mile distance and non-interrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers	5 acres is considered minimum size, 5 to 10 acres is optimal.	Yes

Classification	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria	Application of LOS
School-Park	Depending on circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex and special use.	Determined by location of school district property.	Variable-depends on function	Yes but should not count school only uses
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community based recreation needs as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and ½ to 3 mile distance	As needed to accommodate desired uses usually between 30 and 50 acres	Yes
Large Urban Park	Large urban parks serve a broader purpose than community parks and are used when community and neighborhood parks are not adequate to serve the needs of the community. Focus is on meeting community based recreational needs as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves the entire community.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually a minimum of 50 acres, with 75 or more acres being optimal.	Yes
Natural Resource Area	Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual aesthetics/buffering	Resource availability and opportunity	Variable	No
Greenways	Effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment	Resource availability and opportunity	Variable	No
Sports Complex	Consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities to larger and fewer strategically located throughout the community.	Strategically located community-wide facilities	Determined by projected demand. Usually a minimum of 25 acres with 40 to 80 acres being optimal.	Yes
Special Use	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use.	Variable-dependent on specific use	Variable	Depends on type of use
Private Property	Parks and Recreation facilities that are privately owned yet contribute to the public park and recreation system.	Variable-dependent on specific use	Variable	Depends on type of use

TABLE 5

NRPA SUGGESTED OUTDOOR FACILITY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Activity Format	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Orientation	Service Radius and Location Notes
Badminton	Singles – 17' x 44' Doubles – 20' x 44' width 5' unobstructed area on both sides	1,622 sq. ft.	Long axis north – south	¼ mile usually in school recreation center or church facility. Safe walking or biking access.
Basketball 1. Youth 2. High School 3. Collegiate	46' – 50' x 84' 50' x 94' 50 x 94 with 5' unobstructed space all sides	2400-3036 sq. ft. 5040-7280 sq. ft. 5600-7980 sq. ft.	Long axis north-south	¼- ½ mile. Same as badminton. Outdoor courts in neighborhood /community parks, plus active recreation areas in other park settings.
Handball (3-4 wall)	20' x 40' with a minimum of 10' to rear of 3-wall court. Minimum of 20' overhead clearance	800 sq. ft. for 4-wall 1000 sq. ft. for 3-wall	Long axis is north-south. Front wall at north end	15-30 min. travel time. 4-wall usually indoor as part of multipurpose building. 3-2 all usually in park or school setting
Ice hockey	Rink 85' x 200' (Min. 85' x 185').	22,000 sq. ft. including support area.	Long axis is north-south if outdoors	½ - 1 hour travel time. Climate important consideration affecting no. of units. Best as part of multipurpose facility.
Tennis	36' x 78'. 12 ft. clearance on both ends.	Min. of 7,200 sq. ft. single court area (2 acres per complex)	Long axis north-south	¼ - ½ mile, best in batteries of 2-4. Located in neighborhood / community park or near school site.
Volleyball	30' x 60'. Minimum of 6' clearance on all sides	Minimum 4,000 sq. ft.	Long axis north-south	½ - 1 mile
Baseball 1. Official 2. Little League	Baselines – 90' Pitching Dist. – 60.5' Foul lines – Min. 320' Center field – 400' + Baselines – 60' Pitching distance – 46' Foul lines – 200' Center field – 200'-250'	3.0-3.85 A min. 1.2 A min	Locate home plates so pitcher is not throwing across sun and batter not facing it. Line from home plate through pitchers mound to run east-northeast.	¼ - ½ Mile. Part of neighborhood complex. Lighted fields part of community complex.
Field Hockey	180' x 300' with a minimum of 10' clearance on all sides	Minimum 1.5 A	Fall season – Long axis northwest or southeast. For longer periods north/south.	15-30 minute travel time. Usually part of baseball, football, soccer complex in community park or adjacent to high school.
Football	160' x 360' with a minimum of 6' clearance on all sides	Minimum 1.5 A	Same as field hockey	15-30 Min. travel time, Same as field hockey.
Soccer	195' to 225' x 330' to 360' with 10' minimum clearance on all sides.	1.7-2.1 A.	Same as field hockey	1-2 miles. Number of units depends on popularity. Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to larger fields.
Golf – Driving Range	900' x 690' wide Add 12' width each additional tee	13.5 A for min of 25 tees	Long axis is southwest - northeast with golfer driving northeast.	30-minute travel time. Park or golf course complex, As separate unit may be privately operated.
¼ mile running track	Over-all width – 276' Length – 600' Track width for 8-4 lanes is 32'	4.3 A.	Long axis in sector from north to south to northwest – southeast, with finish line at north end	15-30 minute travel time. Usually part of a high school or community park complex in combination with football, soccer, etc.

Activity Format	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Orientation	Service Radius and Location Notes
Softball	Baselines: 60' Pitching Dist 45' / 40' women Field radius from plate: Fast pitch 225' Slow pitch 275' (men) 250' (women).	1.5 – 2.0 A	Same as baseball	¼ - ½ Mile.
Multiple use court (basketball, tennis, etc.)	120' x 80'	9,840 sq. ft	Long axis of court with primary use north and south	1-2 miles, in neighborhood or community parks.
Archery Range	300' length x minimum 10' between targets. Roped, clear area on side of range minimum of 30', clear space behind targets minimum of 90' x 45' with bunker.	Minimum 0.65 A	Archer facing north + or - 45 degrees	30 minutes travel time. Part of a regional/metro complex
Golf 1. Par 3 (18 hole) 2. 9-hole Standard 3. 18-hole standard	Average length varies –600 – 2700 yards. Average length 2250 yards. Average length 6500 yards.	50-60 A Minimum of 50 A Minimum 110 A	Majority of holes on north/south axis.	½ - 1 hour travel time 9-hole course can accommodate 350 people/day Course may be located in community, district or regional/metro park.
Swimming pools	Teaching – min. 25 yds x 45' even depth of 3 - 4 ft. Competitive min. 25m x 16m. Min of 25 sq. Ft. water surface per swimmer. Ratio of 2 to 1 deck to water	Varies on size of pool and amenities. Usually 1-2 A sites, relation to afternoon sun	None, but care must be taken in sitting lifeguard stations in relation to afternoon sun.	15 to 30 minute travel time. Pools for general community use should be planned for teaching competitive and recreational purposes with enough to accommodate 1m and 3m Diving boards. Located in community park or school site.
Beach Areas	Beach area should have 50 sq. ft. of land and 50 sq. ft. of water per user. Turnover rate is 3. There should be a 3-4 acre supporting area per acre of beach.	N/A	N/A	½ to 1 hour travel time. Should have a sand bottom with a maximum slope of 5% Boating areas completely segregated from swimming areas. Locate in regional/metro parks.

ANALYSIS

A detailed analysis of these standards and how the City of Waukesha meets these standards are presented as follows:

Recreation Objective – To provide an integrated system of public outdoor recreation sites and related open space areas, including areas for both natural resource oriented and non-resource oriented active outdoor recreational activities, which will provide the resident population of the Waukesha planning area with adequate opportunity to participate in a wide range of outdoor recreation activities. For purposes of this report, active uses are viewed as those types of activities

which have impacted and modified the physical landscape, (i.e. grading to accommodate playgrounds, sports fields, etc.)

Principle – The opportunity to attain and maintain good physical and mental health is an inherent right of all residents of the planning area. The provision of outdoor recreation sites and related open space areas contributes to the attainment and maintenance of physical and mental health by providing opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities. An integrated park and related open space system, properly related to the natural resource base, can generate the dual benefits of satisfying recreational demands in an appropriate setting while protecting and preserving valuable natural resources. Finally, an integrated system of outdoor recreation sites and related open space areas can contribute to the orderly growth of the planning area by lending form and structure to urban developments.

Principle - Public outdoor recreation sites promote the maintenance of proper physical and mental health. By providing opportunities to participate in physical activities, whether active or passive, participants will receive social, psychological, and physical benefits, which help to reduce everyday tensions and anxieties, and promote a healthy lifestyle. Well designed and properly located public outdoor recreation sites also provide a sense of community, bringing people together for social and cultural as well as recreational activities, and thus contribute to the desirability and stability of neighborhoods.



Pari Park

Standard – Local governments should provide outdoor recreation sites sufficient in size and number to meet the recreation demands of the resident population. Such sites should contain the natural resources or improvements appropriate to the recreational activities to be accommodated therein and be spatially distributed in a manner that provides ready access to the resident population.

To achieve this standard, the site requirements contained in Table 3 (p. 15) should be met in the City and those portions of the surrounding towns that are located within the City's urban service area. Outside the urban service area, town-owned parks should be provided in each town to serve the need for organized recreational activities, such as softball and picnicking, for residents of the rural areas.

Major natural resource oriented parks and recreational facilities should be provided in the planning area in accordance with the adopted Waukesha County Park and Open Space Plan. (Map 2, p. 20). The City will continue to coordinate with Waukesha County to provide a park system that is in harmony with the County, while meeting the needs of the citizens of the City of Waukesha.

A neighborhood park should be located and developed in conjunction with a neighborhood elementary school when feasible. The elementary school and neighborhood park should provide a focal point for neighborhood activities and be located on a common site available to serve the recreational needs of both school students and neighborhood residents. The recreational facilities provided at a neighborhood park should be based on the standards listed in Table 5 (p. 17).

The City of Waukesha recognizes that recreation activities occur in trends, and that Table 5 (p. 17) should not be used as an all-inclusive list of recreational facilities, but rather as a guide. It is the intent of this plan to provide recreational facilities for appropriate activities as needed. For example, skate

boarding/rollerblading are not listed in Table 5 (p. 17) and no current standards exist for providing such facilities, but a need has been identified in the community and the City should work toward accommodating these type of recreational needs.

MAP 2

OUTDOOR RECREATION ELEMENT OF THE WAUKESHA COUNTY PARK AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

